

Forest Health Accomplishments

Region 6 Forest Health Protection

“Bee” Integrated Resource Stewardship Contract (IRSC)

In 2015, Crescent RD staff, working with the Forest Health Protection staff in Bend, were able to secure competitive funding from the Prevention- Suppression Western Bark Beetle Program to accomplish over 400 acres of treatments that improved stand health and reduced the risk of damage from bark beetles or wildfire. Funds for the project were focused primarily on thinning in-and-around large-diameter pines, removing small-diameter ponderosa pines and lodgepole pines. Post-treatment densities were reduced to within the lower management zone, as identified in the Deschutes NF Plant Association Average Stocking Guide, and the project area now consists mostly of large-diameter ponderosa pines. This money was used in the Bee Integrated Resource Stewardship Project.

The Bee Integrated Resource Stewardship Project was recently awarded near Walker Rim, Crescent, Oregon, within the area covered by the Rim-Paulina EIS. The project area initially contained large-diameter, legacy ponderosa pines with dense understories of smaller ponderosa pine and lodgepole pine of all sizes. Although some salvage harvest had occurred during the early 1990s, the current stand densities were high and above the carrying capacity of the site. The large-diameter ponderosa pines were at high risk of infestation by pine bark beetles whose activity had been causing tree mortality within the area. The large-diameter trees are the component of the vegetative structure that takes the longest to replace, often taking many centuries, and thus they are of high-value to these ecosystems.

Protecting and retaining the large-diameter, legacy trees also provides critical habitat for the white-headed woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*), a R6 Sensitive Management Indicator Species, who require large-diameter ponderosa pine in a relatively open-grown condition, with little understory. The Gilchrist State Forest lands also lie adjacent to the project area and are currently undergoing a fuels reduction project to reduce the risk of a catastrophic fire. The project activities have also helped to reduce the overall risk of fire within the Walker Range wildland urban interface and in the communities of Crescent and Gilchrist.